

THE POWER OF THE PRINCIPAL AND THE LIBRARIAN TO BRING SCHOOLS INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

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MISSION IS THE PURPOSE OF SCHOOLING

“Students are meant to leave school as not merely learned, but inquisitive; not merely knowledgeable, but capable of using their education for good ends; not merely with technical skills but with the appropriate habits of mind that determine whether the skill is used wisely, unwisely, or not used at all when needed. Again, content mastery is not the primary point of teaching even when mission refers to academic goals.”

-- Wiggins and McTighe (2007)

SOURCE OF AUTHORITY AND COLLABORATION

Mission drives the work of the school when it creates strong internal accountability for student learning.

- Staff believe they are responsible for student performance.
- Staff collaborate with one another to analyze student work as well as each other's instructional practice.

MISSION EXPLAINED

MISSION:

- what you are in business to accomplish;**
- the long-term goals that, if met, signify success;**
- the purpose of school**

THOUGHTS ON MISSION

“In the social sectors, the critical question is not How much money do we make per dollar of invested capital? but:

“How effectively do we deliver on our mission and make a distinctive impact, relative to our resources?”

-Jim Collins, *Good to Great*

WHAT AMERICANS THINK

21ST CENTURY SKILLS SURVEY

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- 80%** OF VOTERS SAY THAT THE KIND OF SKILLS STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN TO BE PREPARED FOR THE JOBS OF THE 21ST CENTURY IS DIFFERENT FROM WHAT THEY NEEDED 20 YEARS AGO.
 - 88%** OF VOTERS SAY THEY BELIEVE THAT SCHOOLS CAN AND SHOULD INCORPORATE 21ST CENTURY SKILLS SUCH AS CRITICAL THINKING AND PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS, COMPUTER AND TECHNOLOGY SKILLS, AND COMMUNICATION AND SELF-DIRECTION SKILLS INTO THEIR CURRICULUM.
 - 66%** OF VOTERS SAY THEY BELIEVE THAT STUDENTS NEED MORE THAN JUST THE BASICS OF READING, WRITING AND MATH; SCHOOLS ALSO NEED TO INCORPORATE A BROADER RANGE OF SKILLS.
 - 53%** SAY THEY BELIEVE SCHOOLS SHOULD PLACE AN EQUAL EMPHASIS ON 21ST CENTURY SKILLS AND BASIC SKILLS.

THE MISSION OF THE LIBRARY WAS NEVER MORE VITAL

- Preparing students for the challenges of college and the workplace has highlighted the need for information literacy and technology to be a meaningful component of curriculum designs and instructional practice.
- Engaging all learners in authentic, complex tasks that mirror the real world have elevated the research process from a procedure that is carried out in the library to an inquiry-based framework that supports learning in all subjects.
- Creating tailored learning experiences and resources to optimize learning for each child

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LIBRARY

“The hallmark of a school library in the 21st century is not its collections, its system, its technology, its staffing, its buildings, but its actions and evidences that show that it makes a real difference to student learning, that it contributes in tangible and significant ways to the development of meaning making and constructing knowledge.”

-- Ross Todd

UNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT THE NATURE OF THE WORK

- The effectiveness of the library media program must be measured by what students learned as a result of their experiences.
- There is a clear relationship between professional training and informed practice.
- The funding, structures, and policies of the library media program must support the articulated learning goals and related job descriptions.
- In virtually every school the principal controls opportunity.

WHAT DOES WORK LOOK LIKE IN YOUR LIBRARY?

- What are the students working on?
- What are the goals of the task?
- What structures are in place to support and enrich their learning?
- What are the adults doing in support of the task?
Who “owns” the students? (curricular goals in play, parameters of the task, assistance as needed, grading of final work)

SAME LOGIC APPLIES TO PROGRAMS

- What is the ‘mission’ of the library?
- What would it look like if our plans, instruction, and assessments reflected program goals and Mission?
- What is the gap between what we need to do and what we currently do?

THINKING THROUGH ONE POLICY AT A TIME

- EXAMPLE #1:** STUDENTS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ARE ONLY ALLOWED TO CHECK OUT 2 BOOKS EACH WEEK.
- EXAMPLE #2:** STUDENTS IN NINTH GRADE ARE ALL REQUIRED TO ATTEND A 40 MINUTE ORIENTATION SESSION IN THE LIBRARY. THIS IS THE ONLY MANDATED SESSION IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE.
- EXAMPLE #3:** STUDENTS ARE ALLOWED TO COME TO THE LIBRARY BEFORE SCHOOL, AFTER SCHOOL AND DURING THEIR LUNCH PERIODS

WHAT WORK SHOULD LOOK LIKE IN THE LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER

“The school library is about empowerment, connectivity, engagement, interactivity, and its outcome is knowledge construction. This must be at the centre of our philosophy, the mandate for our role, and the driver of all our day-by-day teaching and learning actions.”

-- Ross Todd

BUT HOW DO YOU GET STUDENTS INTO THE LIBRARY?

The power and problems of collaboration

NEED FOR COLLABORATION IS BIGGER THAN THE ADULTS

Library media specialists must see their work as “the school’s work” not just because the classroom space and resources are shared by all, but because the significance of the learning that is conducted in the library media center is at the heart of the school’s purpose.

REALITY CHECK:

Educators are not naturally social, collaborative beings

- LACK OF CLEAR ACCOUNTABILITY
- STRUCTURE OF PROFESSIONAL DAY
- BUFFER OF CLASSROOM

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS ON COLLABORATION

1. Teachers do not consider their schools to sufficiently exhibit expectations of or support for regular, high levels of collaborative involvement.
2. Teacher work continues to be characterized by competition and individualism and lacks the type of trusting, caring environment that is more conducive to collaborative practice.
3. There needs to be greater articulation of underlying values and beliefs about educational practice that is tempered with respect for diverse professional opinions and practices.
4. Teachers are dissatisfied with scheduling and appropriations of time, which often serve to deter collaborative practice.
5. Teachers need professional development directed at improving their collaborative skills.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS CONTINUED

“The obstacles to collaborative practice today are hauntingly similar to those reported years ago. Teachers still complain that the scarcity of opportunities to collaborate is promulgated by increasing work demands and decreasing time availability. They also continue to lament persisting negative mindsets about the actual desirability of shared work and the resistance to moving beyond the traditional models of teacher relationships.”

LEONARD, L. & LEONARD, P. (2003, SEPTEMBER 17). THE CONTINUING TROUBLE WITH COLLABORATION: TEACHERS TALK. *CURRENT ISSUES IN EDUCATION* [ON-LINE], 6(15). AVAILABLE: <HTTP://CIE.ED.ASU.EDU/VOLUME6/NUMBER15/>

WHY DOESN'T REAL REFORM HAPPEN MORE OFTEN?

“The core of schooling remains relatively stable in the face of often massive changes in the structure around it. Schools legitimize themselves with their various conflicting publics by constantly changing external structures and processes, but shield their workers from any fundamental impact of these changes by leaving the core intact. This accounts for the resilience of practice within the context of constant institutional change.”

-- Richard Elmore

MOTIVATION FOR COLLABORATION AFFECTS RESULTS

- What is the primary motivation?
 - MANY LIBRARIANS SEEK TO RAISE PROFILE OF LIBRARY IN THE MINDS OF THE STAFF - ABOUT STATUS, RESPECT
 - MANY TEACHERS SEEK ADULT RELATIONSHIPS TO SHARE IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INSTRUCTION
 - MOST SEE IT AS A POSITIVE OPPORTUNITY TO GET TO KNOW THE STAFF/LIBRARIAN

COLLABORATION SHOULD BE EXPLICITLY LEARNER-CENTERED

COLLABORATION IS NOT THE END GOAL - IT IS NOT THE DEFINITION OF SUCCESS, THAT IS STUDENT LEARNING

THE HARD QUESTIONS:

- DO COLLABORATIONS ENABLE STUDENTS TO ACHIEVE BETTER/ MORE THAN TRADITIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS SUCH AS ISOLATED LIBRARY LESSONS NOT LINKED TO CURRICULUM CONTENT?
- WHAT IN FACT IS THE LEARNING THAT COMES OUT? IS THAT ANY DIFFERENT THAN IF THE COLLABORATION HAD NOT HAPPENED?
- IF COLLABORATION DOES WORK, WHY DOESN'T IT HAPPEN MORE OFTEN?

TRUTHS ABOUT COLLABORATION

- COLLABORATION IS A VOLUNTARY ACTION THAT IS ANCHORED IN A COMMON GOAL FOR STUDENT LEARNING.
- EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION REQUIRES COMMENSURATE CONTRIBUTIONS FROM EACH PARTICIPANT AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE THE RESULT.
- BECAUSE ONE LMS CANNOT MEANINGFULLY COLLABORATE WITH EVERYONE, HE/SHE WORKS STRATEGICALLY TO HAVE THE GREATEST IMPACT ON STUDENT LEARNING.

WHERE DO WE GROW FROM HERE?

- Root collaboration in the mission of school
 - ACHIEVEMENT OF CURRICULAR GOALS
 - AS MEASURED BY AUTHENTIC, COMPLEX TASKS
- Structure adult meeting time to practice what you value
 - COLLABORATION AS A SHARED EXPECTATION ACROSS ALL STAFF (NOT JUST LMS/CLASSROOM TEACHER)
- Hold staff accountable for the quality of instruction in the library and the results from that instruction